

The Propriety and Usefulness of
SACRED MUSICK.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of

G L O U C E S T E R,

At the Anniverfary MEETING of the Three

C H O I R S

O F

Gloucester, Worcester, and Hereford,

SEPTEMBER 8, 1742.

And publish'd at their joint REQUEST,

(For the USE of their CHARITY)

By WILLIAM TASWELL, M. A. K

Vicar of WOTTON-UNDEREDGE.

G L O U C E S T E R,

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To the REVEREND and WORTHY
MEMBERS
OF THE
Three CHOIRS
OF

Gloucester, Worcester, and Hereford,

And to all the benevolent SUBSCRIBERS to their
humane and virtuous Undertaking,

This DISCOURSE

Is most humbly dedicated by

Their most obedient, and

devoted Servant,

Wm. Tafwell.



MEMBERS

THREE CHORUS

TO THE HONORABLE SOCIETY OF THE
HONORABLE SOCIETY OF THE
HONORABLE SOCIETY OF THE

THIS DISCOURSE

WILLIAM TAYLOR



I CHRON. XVI.†39, 40,†42.

*And Zadok the Priest, and his Brethren
the Priests, before the Tabernacle of
the Lord——*

*To offer Burnt-Offerings unto the Lord
upon the Altar of the Burnt-Offering,
continually Morning and Evening,
and to do according to all that is
written in the Law of the Lord,
which he commanded Israel.*

*And with them Heman and Jeduthun
with Trumpets and Cymbals for those
that should make a Sound, and with
Musical Instruments of God.——*



THIS Passage of Scripture sets
before us the advanced State of
the Jewish Religion (so far, I
mean, as it concern'd the *Publick Wor-*
ship of God) under the Reign of his
chosen

chosen Servant *David*; which from an unsettled, local and itinerant Worship, transferr'd continually from Tent to Tent, and from Tabernacle to Tabernacle, was now assuming the auspicious Beginnings of a more decent and comely Form, when their great and solemn Symbol, the Ark of God's Covenant, was from the House of *Obed-Edom* placed and fix'd in the City of *David*.

THE Jewish Worship, it is observable, kept Pace always with her Civil Polity, acquir'd Strength in its Increase, and rose in its Beauty, as *That* in its Magnificence and Power. The shifting and unsettled State consequently of a People, who from their Introduction into the Promis'd Land had been continually enlarging their Borders by War, and making themselves, as it were, a Country by Conquest, wou'd, no doubt, but ill admit of the Regularity of a Publick Worship in the Decency and

and Propriety that a settled and well-polic'd People cou'd be suppos'd capable of instituting and observing: Nor indeed could the Man after *God's own Heart* carry his Service into a more becoming Form, 'till he had brought his Enemies to an advantageous Peace, remov'd the dire Effects of civil Discord, and, under God's Assistance, fix'd his Seat of Empire.

BUT, after this happy Period of his Piety and Toils, He soon, we are told, took to himself Reproach, upon the Recollection that the Ark of God dwelt within Curtains while he himself dwelt in a House of Cedar; and tho' the Execution of his great Designs, resulting from hence, was reserv'd by God for the Glory of his Son's Reign, yet the Plan of a graceful and well-model'd Publick Worship was laid down under the Divine Permission by *David* himself, which *Solomon* so far improv'd upon
after-

afterwards as to carry to the *Beauty of Holiness*.---Yet the Plan, I say, was laid down by *David*--He inclos'd the wand'ring Ark in a Tabernacle, which he appointed an Order of Priests to attend for a regular Morning and Evening Sacrifice of Oblation and Worship; to raise yet the Dignity of which, and introduce a Service more worthy of the Deity,---he calls in the Aid of *Musick Instrumental*, as well as *Vocal*; taught it to raise and animate Devotion, and appointed, in the Words of my Text,

Zadok the Priest, &c. &c. &c.

THE Use that I shall make of this Scripture will be to shew the Propriety and Usefulness of *Sacred Musick*, which I shall do,

- I. From several Considerations drawn from the Antiquity and Practice thereof both in the Jewish, Christian,

tian, as well as the wisest and best polic'd States of the Heathen World.

II. FROM the Nature of the Thing itself, and its peculiar Expedience and Aptitude to the Publick Worship and Service of God.

MUSICK appears to have been one of the most antient of all Arts that stand recorded in their Invention. *Moses* carries it up into a very early Period of the Ante-Diluvian World, and deduces the Origin of Instrumental Musick from *Jubal*, a Sixth only in his Descent from *Cain*. There is no Doubt but *Vocal* had a yet earlier Origin——perhaps from our first Parents themselves; for it is founded, I must observe, in Nature, Modulation of Voice being a Property of Humanity——and the Use of it, doubtless, must soon be suggested to Men from the Variety of Notes

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in the Melody of Birds—Nature's first Choiristers*—and in whose Songs indeed, had Speech itself been wanting to *Mankind*, God had for ever ordain'd the “ *Outgoings of the Morning and Evening to praise him.*”

THE Application of this Art to the Service of Religion we shall likewise find very early in the Records of Antiquity—Not that I mention this, apprehending Antiquity itself an Argument of any great Force to establish a controverted Practice, because in the more early Times of the World Men were, doubtless, as liable to think wrong as now, nay more so probably, not having the Experience that we have to guide and form their Judg-

* *At liquidas Avium Voces imitantes Ore
Ante fuit multo, quam lævia Carmina Cantu
Concelebrare Homines possent, Aureisq; juvare.*

LUCRET. Lib. v.---1378.

(11)

ments by—but a concurring Series of Consent to any Practice of Antiquity brought down through After-Ages to latest Posterity, is an Argument, I must observe, that can scarce with Justice, nor indeed with common Modesty, be resisted; and it is in this Light only that I propose to shew the Application of Musick to the Worship of God.

WE find then this Art call'd in to the Assistance of Religion by the great Jewish Law-giver, who himself commun'd with God, and promulgated a Religion immediately from its Divine Author. Two of his sacred Songs are yet extant, in their Style and Manner peculiarly ennobled and elevated—and what may here deserve our particular Attention is—the last of these is recorded by the Author of the *Revelations* as the Subject Matter of the Praise and Adoration of the Bless'd above, who are said to sing continually the Song of

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Moses,

Moses, Servant to God, saying, “ *Great*
“ *and marvellous are thy Works, Lord*
“ *God Almighty; just and true are thy*
“ *Ways, O King of Saints.* *” Whether *Moses* first instituted sacred Musick, is not very material; but as this first Institution of it at least, which we have upon Record, we find supported by such a collateral Sanction as I have now recited, our Conceptions of it surely must be infinitely rais’d with regard to its Propriety in God’s Worship.

DURING the remaining Part of the Theocratical State of the Jews, we have various other Instances of their Estimation of Musick, and of its more immediate Propriety in the Worship of God; and indeed the most noble and inspir’d Parts of their Devotional Service appear to have been those where they have

* Rev. xv. 3.

call'd in its Aid. The Song of *Deborah* and *Barak* is the Height itself of Sublime, and under all the Disadvantages of Translation from a Language to whose Idiom it is so peculiarly adapted, whether we consider it for its Majesty of Style, or its Beauty and Simplicity of Sentiment, it must be acknowledg'd as the just Reproach of the most elevated *Human* Compositions that have ever since appear'd upon a Comparison.

WHEN the Regal Government became in some Measure settled under *David*, the Arts of Peace we find rearing their Heads——Taking the Lead, amidst the first of which Musick appears in all its Lustre. Here She threw off the Restraints of her former Simplicity, and address'd the Ear in all the Variety of Instrumental Sounds; Masters and Artizans in all the several Parts of Harmony were called in to the
Service

Service of the Tabernacle, and in regular Orders set apart and consecrated to it; and in Process of Time had peculiar Privileges and Immunities bestow'd on them, as upon Men deem'd in a more eminent Degree deserving of, and serviceable to their Country *. Religion from hence appears to have receiv'd Nerves, and Devotion Wings; for their Revolts to Idolatry became far less frequent, and their Adoration appear'd in the most noble and affecting Strains of Piety and Praise, of which the Book of Psalms will for ever remain as a standing Memorial.

Solomon, inspir'd with Wisdom from God himself, advanc'd Religion, (but advanc'd it upon this Plan) to yet higher Improvements; and from his

* After their Return from the Babylonish Captivity, they were exempted from all Toll and Tribute. *Ezra vii. 24.*

Time it still continued to assist and influence their Worship 'till they were led captive into *Babylon*, but was then compell'd to submit to the fatal Reverse of their fall'n Affairs. The Harp and Cymbal forgot their Sounds, and the Hand that moved them its wonted Cunning——for Harmony but ill suited with Captivity, nor the joyous Songs of *Sion* with the insupportable Miseries of a *strange Land*: Well might thy captive Daughters increase the *Waters of Babylon* with their Tears, when they remember'd Thee, O *Sion*, and thy forsaken Walls, and ruined Temple, that had so often echoed to their sacred Song.—But after the Union of the *Babylonish* and *Persian* Monarchies, when the Jews were permitted by *Cyrus* to return to their native Country, and rebuild their Temple, Musick was again call'd in to its Service, and continued to support their Worship 'till its last final Destruction.

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As it is from hence very evident, that a Publick Worship can never be carried on in any Degree of Gracefulness and Propriety but under the Support and Encouragement of the Civil Power, permit me therefore to observe of what high Importance to Religion is the Protection of the *Civil Magistrate*; and of what still higher Import is *his* Vigilance over the Publick-Weal, and his Promotion of its Prosperity, in order to enable him to extend that Protection? He is repaid for This, by the Subjection, Order and Discipline that Religion enforces, and by the various Offices and Virtues of Labour, Temperance and Obedience, which it enjoins; without a Regard to which, all Government would be immediate Anarchy and Uproar. Thus indeed is the Assistance which Religion and the State lend to each other reciprocal, and their Support mutual; and take them either
Way,

Way, the Magistrate can no longer be said to be the Guardian of the one, than he is that of the other. For Government is to be look'd upon as a well-compacted Machine, consisting of different Parts, all tending to carry on certain and fix'd Unity of Design; if any one of which is injur'd or taken away, its corresponding Parts will in a just Proportion be weaken'd or render'd useless, till the whole itself is inevitably dissolv'd.

I SHALL be excus'd, I persuade myself, this seeming Digression, when it will be found in some measure to obviate an Objection to Church-Musick from its Omission and Disuse, in the first Institution, as well as the Primitive Times of Christianity. It is very evident from hence, that Improvements of this Nature cou'd never be expected but in a settled and establish'd Church, and That existing in a well-polic'd and prosperous State: If even the Protec-

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tion, as it appears, of the Civil Magistrate was necessary, how could it be look'd for under his Discouragement and Persecution, in any Degree at least corresponding to that of the antient *Temple-Musick*. But when the Church's Peace and Quiet commenc'd, and as the regular and settled Government of her several States would admit thereof, it return'd, we find, to its original Improvements, and re-animated her Worship with the most masterly Force and Propriety of Instrumental Sounds.

IN the mean while we have sufficient Evidence of its Use, so far as *Vocal Musick* was concern'd, (which was all, it is plain, that the first State of Christianity would admit of) not only from the Practice of our Blessed Lord himself, and his Apostles *, but from *That*

* Matt. xxvi. 20.

I Cor. xiv. 15.

likewise of the Primitive Christians through every Century, 'till the settled Quiet, I say, of the Church, and the proper Establishment of her several States enabled them to carry it into higher Improvements.

I BEG Leave to offer you but one farther Argument in Behalf of Church-Musick, and *that* drawn from the earliest Times of Christianity. We find in several Parts of the *Revelations* the Heavenly Worship of the Lamb of God represented to be perform'd in the strictest Resemblance and Imagery of the antient *Temple-Musick*—their very Instruments are introduc'd, and the Four and twenty Elders describ'd “ *falling down before the Lamb, having every one of them Harps.* * ” Which tho' no doubt figurative, and intended only to express a Sense of the highest

* Rev. v. 8.

and most perfect Adoration that could possibly be convey'd to us——yet it is highly improbable that the Blessed Spirit should make Use of such Terms, by which to convey to us the Sense of an *Heavenly Worship*, as were in an *Earthly one* to be look'd upon as unlawful and criminal.

To This let me, *lastly*, add the Authority of the antient Heathen World—I say the *Authority*——for tho' Musick, it is true, was there made subservient to the Promotion of Idolatry and false Worship, yet when I subjoin their Use of it to the Practice of the Jewish and Christian States, it much, I apprehend, increases the Force of our Argument, as it establishes it upon the common and united Consent of Mankind, which brings an Argument as near always to Demonstration as it is possible to be carried.

BE pleas'd therefore, in this Sense, to attend to it, and it will be by no Means foreign to my Purpose to inform you that *Musick* was, among the Heathens themselves, likewise held in the highest Esteem and Veneration, especially throughout the wisest and best-polic'd States of antient *Greece* *. The most sublime of their Poets, to shew their high Opinion of it, are continually inculcating that it is us'd in Heaven as the Entertainment of their Heroes and Gods. The Mythologies of *Amphion* and *Orpheus*, under which no less than

* It was indeed, according to *Herodotus*, a very distinguishing Characteristick in their Manners, after they had brought the Ægyptian Arts and Learning to any Degree of Maturity and Improvement. He records it, it is to be observ'd, as their general Characteristick; at the same Time taking Notice, that the *Argians*, judg'd to be the most polish'd of all their States, were thought to excel in Musick the rest of their Countrymen——κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ τῆτον χρόνον καὶ Ἀργεῖοι ἤκεον Μουσικὴν εἶναι Ἑλλήνων πρῶτοι.

HEROD. Lib. III. 213. Edit. Gale.

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the civilizing of Mankind is couch'd, must be perpetual Monuments of their high Sense and Veneration of it. Various are the Hymns still extant that were compos'd and sung in Honour of their Gods. The Laws of the celebrated *Lycurgus*, which he pretended himself to have receiv'd from Heaven, were set to Musick * in order to increase their Veneration and Observance. And we are inform'd indeed, that antiently all Exhortations to Virtue, as well as all Truths *divine* and *human*, were written in Verse, and sung publickly by a Cho-

* By *Terpander*, a very celebrated Master of Harmony in those Times, who, according to the younger *Pliny*, advanc'd Musick to very great Improvements by the Addition of seven Chords to the Lyre. *PLIN. Nat. Hist.* 1615. 135. But what is yet more eminently remarkable in the Conduct of this wise Legislator is---when by several Edicts he banish'd all the Arts and Improvements of Luxury, as pernicious to the rising Greatness of the *Spartan* State, which he push'd on indeed with a Rigour even to the Expulsion of the Sculpture, Freeze and Cornish of Architecture itself, he yet thought proper to retain Musick, judging it indispensably necessary to the Support and Promotion of Virtue. *PLUT. Vit. Lyc.*

rus to the Sound of Instruments *—
 Such then, on the general Consent of
 Mankind, has been its Veneration al-
 ways for Musick, and such its Use and
 Propriety which we now take upon us
 to justify.

BUT, exclusive of all Precedent, the
 Expedience of Musick, as it stands in
 itself, only is sufficient to recommend
 it to the Worship of God.

THE proper Source indeed, it must
 be confess'd, of all true Religion and
 Reason, and its Streams should be al-

* *Plutarch* introduces *Thales* engaged in an Exercise of this
 Kind, and with the finest Address and Skill making Use of
 Musick as an Handmaid to Virtue. Under the Semblage of
 a Lyrick Poet, he tells us, he perform'd the Part of a most
 excellent Legislator and Moralist, and that his Songs were
 most irresistibly perswasive to Virtue, Obedience and Concord.

— ἀπέστειλεν εἰς τὴν Σπάρτην Θάλητα Ποιητὴν μὲν δοκῶντα
 νεκρὴν μελῶν καὶ πρῶτον τὴν τέκνην ταύτην πεποιήμενον,
 ἔργῳ δὲ ἄπειρ' οἱ κερταίσει τῶν νομοθετῶν διαπραττόμενοι. Λόγοι
 αὖ ἦσαν αἱ ὁδοὶ πρὸς ἐπιθειάν καὶ ὁμόνοιαν ἀνακλήτικα διὰ
 τῶν αἶμα καὶ ρυθμῶν πολὺ τοῖς κόσμικοις ἔχοντων, &c. &c.

PLUT. *Franc. Edit.* 1609. P. 41. V. 1.

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ways such as may confess that Source, and shew the Tincture of a well-grounded and rational Faith. But when its Truths and Principles have once been well impress'd upon us, and to each such Impression Reason has given its sacred Sanction—it has in some measure, I apprehend, done its Work; and what remains, is of a more operative and active Nature, in which every Passion that the Supreme Disposer has thought fit to inform our Beings withal, is to be awaken'd, and call'd up into his Service, acting indeed always in a well-order'd Subservience to *that Reason* from whence, properly speaking, they have their Call.—Hence in the Good the Detestation of Sin; the Love of Virtue; the Warmth of Charity; and the Rapture of Devotion.

AND there is no Part of Religion, I must observe, in which the Affections demand

demand greater Address and Assistance, than in the Devotional Parts of it; so that whatsoever, we must therefore conclude, will contribute to This, is, doubtless, Religion's Friend, and in the strictest Propriety must be allow'd to advance God's Service.

HERE then Musick seizes its indisputed Province. Various indeed are the Authorities of Histories, sacred as well as prophane, and of all Times, of its prodigious Effects and Influence over the *Human Mind*. But let it suffice to observe, that She has always assum'd a very immediate Controul and Government of the Affections. It has been Her's—to calm the tumultuous and discordant Passions, and to rouse and dissipate the lethargick Languors of the Soul; to assuage Anger—to awaken Pity—to sweeten the Bitterness of Woe—and irradiate the very Gloom itself of Despair. Why therefore are we to

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exclude so powerful an Assistant from the Service of God only, nay from that Part of it, where our Affections, as I have shewn you, chiefly are concern'd? And what good Effects might not, on the other hand, be expected from it, when call'd into Religion by a judicious and masterly Hand, and under worthy and skilful Performers?

BUT as every Pleasure, I am sensible, must be adapted to our Faculties of Perception, so it is with regard to the Use and Propriety of all Objects whatever. We should cease to wonder at therefore, nor are by any means, I think, at Liberty to blame *Those*, who from an utter Insensibility perhaps of these Effects of Harmony, make Choice rather of a Worship adapted to their own peculiar Turn of Thought, and of a more *dark and melancholy Cast*, and equally injurious will it be in *them*. I must observe likewise, to censure on

this

this Account—Those “ *who have Ears to hear*, and are zealous in the Encouragement of Church Musick, finding themselves relieved thereby, and their Devotions warm’d and animated. This, I believe, cannot be thought very unreasonable on either Side—I shall here therefore choose to let the Matter rest, as I have no Design to embitter my Subject with Controversy, nor in the least to calumniate others, but only to justify ourselves.

BUT however, we may some few of us clash in Sentiment as to this—I am now at least happy in leading your Attention to a Subject in which we must all agree, a Subject of *universal Influence and Obligation* that concerns us both as *Christians*, and indeed *Men*. Nor will our Transition from Harmony to Charity be thought, I hope, any ways forc’d or unnatural.—*Job*, I must observe, makes it, but in the Reverse,

verse, from Charity to Harmony, when by his Relief he tells us, *He caus'd the Widow's Heart to sing for Joy.* However, they are certainly Sisters that may well go Hand in Hand, though here indeed one seems to step in as the other's Harbinger, to open and enlarge your Hearts in the Support of her Cause.

DISTRESS, wherever it appears, calls upon the *humane and friendly Mind*, and Religion adds Energy to its Call; and, intent ever on the Good of Mankind, raises our Attention to it into the most consummate of its Virtues. But still there are Degrees, it must be allow'd, among its Objects, to which our Incitements are naturally proportion'd — in the foremost of which, the forsaken *Widow* and helpless *Orphan* will, I hope, always be allow'd to solicit your Protection and Relief. — And in the present Case permit me to observe their Plea may be yet farther in-

forc'd,

forc'd, as their Destitution is the Result of no Fault or Imprudence in themselves, but such as is to be imputed only to the Stroke of Heaven, in the Removal of the sole Fountain of their Maintenance and Support; and whose present Wants must be indeed doubly embitter'd by the painful Reflexions of what' they *have been heretofore*—sufficient at least and reputable Livers—and, if I may yet further add, the Relations and Dependants of Those who have *serv'd at God's Altar*; whose Labours, while living, would not admit of the Care of enlarging their private Fortunes, but were necessarily confin'd to the Provision only of our *Spiritual Food*; and who dying, must feel from thence the insupportable Pang of leaving their most dear and tender Pledges destitute of *natural Sustenance*.

IT is the lamented Misfortune of our Times, that as the Luxury of them
has

has increas'd, our Pleasures have degenerated, and assum'd a very low, sensual and irrational Turn, such as is confin'd commonly to the unmanly Improvements of that Luxury, and have *Sense* chiefly for their Origin, and *Self* for their End. Lost is the *good old chearful, the hospitable and benevolent Spirit* of our wealthy Forefathers, and all their more manly Pleasures sunk into a most vitiated Taste of Ostentation, and various Effeminacies gilded over with the false Ideas of Politeness and Improvement by their degenerate Progeny.—Polish indeed! for we have gain'd in *Surface*—but we have lost in *Substance*, and the Ballance will, I fear, be found too much against us. But I am happy in congratulating the better Dispositions of this *shining Assembly*—It is yours to rescue Pleasure from this Reproach, to teach it for a while to listen to the Voice of Reason and Humanity—nay to infuse into it the Spi-

rit of Religion itself—and, indeed its
most *vital Spirit*, CHARITY.

ENCOURAGE then every Friendly and
Christian Sentiment within you, in a
Cause so worthy of your Benevolence
—And may that Charity that shall
survive all her Sister Virtues and Graces,
that shall survive Mortality and even
Time itself, bring you to those blessed
Regions of Peace and Harmony, where
eternal Hallelujahs are sung before the
Throne of God, at whose *Right Hand*
are Pleasures for evermore.

The E N D.



(31)

of Religion and in the
the Church of Christ.

to the great glory and
the Christian community
the world of men and women.

And now that the
the all his children and
the shall move forward
the shall bring you to the

of Peace and Harmony
and a lasting
one of God
the Father



The E. N. D.



